

# SO254-15 Media, Audiences and Social Change

**21/22**

**Department**

Sociology

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 2

**Module leader**

Eric Jensen

**Credit value**

15

**Module duration**

10 weeks

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

SO254-15 Media, Audiences and Social Change

[Module web page](#)

### Module aims

This module presents theories of mass media production and reception alongside empirical approaches to understanding the relationship between media and society. The module reveals the motivations, norms and practices defining media industries, their audiences and the forms of influence that develops from the interaction between these two forces. It also considers the role of media, including social media, in processes of social change.

Throughout the module, the presentation of classical and contemporary theory and research on the role of media and society will focus on audiences. Media audiences play a pivotal, if rapidly changing, role in the emerging new media context. This role will be explored within the context of contemporary theory, research and examples of media influence.

Media, Audiences and Social Change provides insights into the benefits of employing

interdisciplinary approaches and methods through drawing upon (in addition to sociology) the fields of media, cultural and communication studies, anthropology and psychology. Research and analytical skills will be developed through critical engagement with academic resources drawn from these fields. Skill development will also focus on critically analysing a range of examples of media theory and research based on conceptual and methodological criteria.

## **Outline syllabus**

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

### **Week Lecture Topic**

- 1 Introduction to media and social change in the era of COVID-19
- 2 Media, audiences and social change during crises: The role of scientific information
- 3 Media, audiences and social change during crises: Fake news and social attitudes
- 4 Media, audiences and social change during crises: Conspiracy and social critique
- 5 Media, audiences and social change during crises: The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media
- 6 Reading Week
- 7 Media, audiences and social change during crises: Conducting media audience research online
- 8 Media, audiences and social change during crises: Online ethnography
- 9 Social media audiences and sentiment analysis
- 10 Media, audiences and social change in the 21st century

## **Learning outcomes**

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an intermediate level of understanding of the relationship between media and society
- Demonstrate an intermediate level of understanding of key theoretical perspectives relevant to media audience research
- Demonstrate an intermediate level of understanding of the significance and sociological implications of socio-technological developments in transforming the role of media and audiences in contemporary societies
- Demonstrate an intermediate level of understanding of how major events in contemporary global society are selectively defined, elaborated and evaluated – and amplified – by news media, and the sociological implications of these patterns
- Demonstrate an intermediate level of understanding of the role of legacy and social media in fostering social change
- Critically engage with debates about the role of media in society.
- Critically appraise some of the approaches and methods of the empirical investigation of the relationship between media and society.

- Able to draw analytically on a range of resources and materials, including academic, journalistic, and other media texts, to inform understanding, argument and analysis.
- Able to engage confidently in oral and written analysis and debate and to present arguments in a coherent, structured, and balanced fashion, with critical introspection where appropriate.

## **Indicative reading list**

Thompson, J. 1995. *The media and modernity: A social theory of the media*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

M. E. McCombs and D. L. Shaw (1972) *The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media*. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 36, pp. 176-187.

Introne et al. (2018). How people weave online information into pseudoknowledge. *Social Media and Society* 4(3).

Thompson, John B. (1988). Mass communication and modern culture: Contribution to a critical theory of ideology. *Sociology* 22:359-383.

Herman, Edward S., and Noam Chomsky. (1988). *Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media*. London: Vintage. [Manufacturing consent: the political economy of the mass media (chap. 1 - 'A Propaganda Model')]

Huber et al. (2019). Fostering public trust in science: The role of social media. *Public Understanding of Science* 28(7): 759-777.

Apuke et al. (2020). Fake news and COVID-19: modelling the predictors of fake news sharing among social media users. *Telematics and Informatics*.

S. Hall, 'Encoding / decoding' in Hall et al (eds) *Culture, Media, Language* (1974) [Culture, media, language [electronic resource] : working papers in cultural studies]

Mueller-Herbst et al. (2020). Saw it on Facebook: The Role of Social Media in Facilitating Science Issue Awareness. *Social Media and Society* 6(2): 1-14.

## **Interdisciplinary**

Module engages with social anthropology, media studies, communication studies and psychology (in addition to sociology).

## **International**

Examples and literature in the course engage extensively with global challenges and cases across a diverse range of national and supra-national contexts.

## **Subject specific skills**

Media literacy

Literature review

Application of theory to real world examples

## Transferable skills

Critical thinking  
Desk research  
Ability to synthesise ideas  
Time management  
Critical introspection  
Communication skills

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## Study

### Study time

| Type          | Required                  |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| Lectures      | 9 sessions of 1 hour (6%) |
| Seminars      | 9 sessions of 1 hour (6%) |
| Private study | 132 hours (88%)           |
| Total         | 150 hours                 |

### Private study description

132 hours of private study

## Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

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## Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

### Assessment group A

|   | Weighting | Study time |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Reflective and Analytical Essay   | 100%      |            |
| This essay will test the students' ability to synthesise and apply the ideas they encountered during the module, including both applying these ideas to their personal experiences with media |           |            |

## **Weighting**

## **Study time**

and also critically engaging with relevant empirical and theoretical literature.

Formative assessment will take the form of open-book online quizzes on the readings. These will serve a self-diagnostic role for the students.

## **Feedback on assessment**

Written or recorded verbal feedback provided on essay, following department procedures

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## **Availability**

### **Courses**

This module is Core optional for:

- Year 3 of ULAA-ML33 Undergraduate Law and Sociology

This module is Optional for:

- USOA-L301 BA in Sociology
  - Year 2 of L301 Sociology
  - Year 2 of L301 Sociology
  - Year 2 of L301 Sociology
- Year 2 of ULPA-P301 Undergraduate Media and Creative Industries
- Year 2 of USOA-L314 Undergraduate Sociology and Criminology

This module is Option list A for:

- ULAA-ML34 BA in Law and Sociology (Qualifying Degree)
  - Year 3 of ML34 Law and Sociology (Qualifying Degree)
  - Year 4 of ML34 Law and Sociology (Qualifying Degree)
- Year 4 of ULAA-ML33 Undergraduate Law and Sociology

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 2 of UPOA-ML13 Undergraduate Politics and Sociology

This module is Option list D for:

- Year 2 of UHIA-VL13 Undergraduate History and Sociology